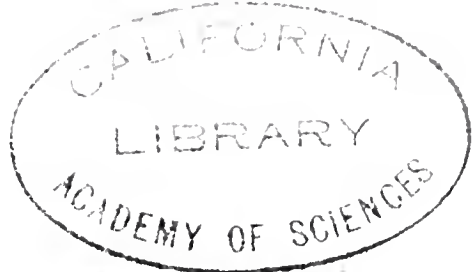


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# THE

MONTHLY



# GULL

BULLETIN

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NUMBER 5

**MAY MEETING:** The next regular meeting of the Association will be held on Thursday evening, 13th inst., at eight o'clock, in the Assembly Hall of the Public Library, corner of McAllister and Larkin Sts. Take elevator to third floor. Car lines No. 5 or No. 19.

Mr. Carl R. Smith, Vice-President, will recount his experiences in the midst of the abundant bird and mammal population of the northern belt of the country, taking for his subject: "Reminiscences of Wild Life in the Territory of the Dakotas." Visitors will be made welcome.

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**MAY FIELD TRIP** will be taken on Sunday, 16th inst., to Cashion, Contra Costa County. San Francisco members will take 8:00 a. m. Key Route ferry, and Sacramento Short Line train at the mole. East Bay members may take train at College and Shafter Aves. at 8:35 a. m. Purchase round trip tickets to Cashion; from San Francisco, \$1.00; from Oakland, 75c. Bring lunch and water. Distance, 5-7 miles. Return train leaves Cashion at 4:25 p. m. Leader, Miss Ethel Crum.

\* \* \*

**PROCEEDINGS OF APRIL MEETING:** The one hundred-eleventh regular meeting of the Association was held on April 8th, in the Assembly Hall of the San Francisco Public Library, with President Kibbe in the chair; Mrs. Parry, Acting Secretary; twelve members and three guests braved the very inclement weather, which, however, was not quite as bad as upon the occasion of Dr. Storer's last previous lecture.

In the effort to expedite the business session, no matter of importance was presented for consideration, except the pending legislation providing for the acquisition and administration of refuges for migratory birds. In this connection Mr. Smith presented the following resolution, which, after seconding by Mrs. Kibbe, was unanimously adopted:

WHEREAS, the Audubon Association of the Pacific has for several years considered the problem of sustenance of our Migratory Water Fowl during the periods of their sojourn in our country, and

WHEREAS, such consideration has shown the futility of protecting the birds from slaughter while we are at the same time draining the lakes and marshes upon which they are dependent for resting places and for sustenance, and

WHEREAS, we are convinced that the Migratory Bird Refuge and Marsh Land Conservation Act, in its present form, (Senate 2607, H. R. 7479), offers a business-like solution of this problem, and provides for administration of the necessary refuge areas by the Federal Bureau most competent and appropriate for the purposes,

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Audubon Association of the Pacific respectfully urge upon our Senators and Representatives in Congress, the importance of prompt and favorable action in respect of this measure for the salvation of our migratory water fowl and ask that they do everything in their power to bring it to a vote at the earliest possible time.

Dr. Tracy I. Storer, Assistant Professor of Zoology and Zoologist at the University of California College of Agriculture at Davis, then entertained those present with one of the most interesting lectures that have ever been delivered at our meetings. Dr. Storer covered the entire range of "Avian Architecture", from the rudimentary nest on the bare ground to the most elaborate and highly insulated and protective type; from a loose network of twigs, barely sufficient to hold the eggs, to the enclosed, weather-tight and carefully lined domicile. He reviewed the breeding cycle and outlined the considerations which governed the locations of nests, in the respects of territory, altitude and character of support. While the location of nests is usually related to the habitual foraging range of the species, there are many exceptions. The song sparrow nests in thickets, where it forages, but the lutescent warbler and the solitaire, foraging well above ground, yet build their nests on the ground. Sea birds must nest where they can deposit their eggs, but they forage out at sea.

The participation of the two sexes was noted; how the male selects the general area and the female, the exact location; how the nest-building, usually the work of the female, is sometimes shared by the male; how the phalaropes reverse the usual distribution of labor in the breeding cycle. The lecturer described certain characteristic peculiarities in construction, such as the bit of snake skin which adorns the nest of the ashy-throated flycatcher, and described at considerable length diagnostic forms of many species or groups. The lecture was profusely illustrated by lantern slides, and at its conclusion the meeting adjourned with expressions of high appreciation on the part of the audience.



Acquisitions to membership, since the last announcement are as follows: Mrs. A. L. Fluthey, Miss Emma C. Schultz and Mrs. Ralph Stern, of San Francisco; Mr. P. F. Bunker, of Berkeley.



### THE CALIFORNIA CONDOR—A MODERN ROC

Excerpt from an article by WALTER FRY, in charge, Nature Guide Service, Sequoia National Park, in *Bulletin of the American Game Protective Association*, April, 1926.

The California condor is the largest of the Vulture family. In fact, it is probably the largest flying bird in the world. The condor is heavily built, weighs about 20 pounds and is about four feet long, with a wing spread of 10 to 12 feet. Its bare neck is like a turkey. The huge bird flies gracefully and soars for hours almost without flapping its wings. The condor is a scavenger, eating only carrion.

The only bird resembling the condor is the buzzard. But the condor when standing may at once be distinguished by the white border of the greater wing coverts and neck muffler, and when in flight by the white spots under the wing coverts.

I have seen several condors in the park and have been much interested in their methods of taking flight from the ground. The big birds apparently cannot rise directly from the ground but run along with wings outspread, catching the air gradually, bumping along and helping with their feet for all the world like a low-powered aeroplane taking flight.

While the California condor has not been found nesting in the Sequoia National Park, this giant of the air and king of birds has been a casual visitor to the park ever since the first arrival of white settlers in 1856. Early day settlers proclaim that the birds were frequently seen but the condors have come less and less frequently, so that for several years past it has been feared that each occurrence would give the last sight of this fast vanishing species of bird life. The inroads of settlement, persistent shooting, robbing nests of eggs, poison baits set out for coyotes and the fact that the birds are not prolific breeders, reduced them so rapidly that the species was practically wiped out before people realized what was happening and before laws could be enacted to save them.

Before the arrival of white men in California, the condor had little to fear, but when man appeared on the scene to upset all the workings of nature with his death-dealing methods, this useful and picturesque species rapidly diminished and may soon be extinct.

The first death trap for the condor was man with firearms. It was a great event to kill one of these giant navigators of the air for they were bold and came within easy rifle range. Man's next destructive effort was to obtain eggs of the wonderful bird to accompany his specimen. Then came the custom of the sheepmen, of putting out poison baits in the carcasses of sheep. No doubt thousands of condors met their death through eating poison. For many years there were no restrictions placed on the methods of poisoning or what kinds of poison could be used. It seemed every man's privilege to use the most deadly poison for the purpose that he could obtain. As an illustration of this, while I was stopping at Huron, Fresno County, California, during 1890, Mr. Manuel Cadoza, a sheep-herder, brought in two beautiful dead condors. These birds had died from eating poison. Coyotes had killed two of his sheep and he had poisoned the carcasses in the hope of killing the coyotes; but instead of getting the animals he got the two big birds that had been feeding on the dead sheep. Cadoza said that he noticed several of the condors around the poisoned sheep the day before and upon going out in the evening found the dead ones a few yards from the bait.

These were the first condors that I had seen and such was their size and curious appearance, they seemed to me rather the birds of some fabulous tale than ones that lived in these modern days.

The California condor is now making its last fight for life. Unless some action is taken to save the modern roe it will join the dodo and the great auk as a legend instead of a living example of the Creator's handiwork. This monstrous bird is the product of nature working through the ages for thousands or millions of years. The destruction of the species thus deprives the earth of a wonderful organism which no human power can ever again restore. Even under the present laws for their protection I can see no chance for the survival of the condor. Poison will do its work. They are now on the very verge of extermination. It is doubtful if there are 100 individuals living to-day. Every friend of birds and of the picturesque in nature should come to the rescue of the condor before it is too late.

On November 27, 1925, there was unveiled at the Los Angeles Museum of History, Science and Art a large mural painting of prehistoric animals, birds and other creatures of California. The paintings were based on skeletons dug from the La Brea asphalt pits near Los Angeles. Among the pictures are those of giant vultures with a wing spread of 20 feet, sabre-toothed tigers, giant ground sloths, huge wolves, imperial elephants with huge curved tusks, wild horses, camels and California lions twice the size of the present day African lion. In the process of evolution this terrible, if interesting, fauna doubtless had to give way or man might not be here to-day. But in the condor we have perhaps the last great bird of the Pleistocene Age, just as the giant sequoias are the surviving specimens of a mammoth vege-



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tation of a past geological period. The condor is not only harmless, it is useful and highly picturesque. Let us save this modern roc, every sight of which conjures up the tale of Sinbad, the sailor, in the Arabian Nights.

Only quick action will save the condor. The following are suggestions:

1. Laws to make it a felony to kill a condor or take eggs for a period of twenty years.
2. Laws making it a misdemeanor for any person to put out poisoned bait of any kind, except that which has been certified for use by the proper authorities.
3. Signs posted at conspicuous places throughout the state by Audubon societies and other interested organizations, carrying a colored picture of the bird, with printed copies of the laws for its protection.
4. When condors are seen in any part of the state, the observer should be requested to immediately notify the California Fish and Game Commissioners of the birds' presence, giving date seen, locality, and number of birds seen.

\* \* \*

**APRIL FIELD TRIP** was taken on Sunday, April 11th, to Lake Merced, following the usual course along the west and south shores of the two lakes, and out through Daly City to the Mission car line. The day was clear and bright. Lunch was eaten at the picnic grounds near the Olympic golf links.

Interesting features of the day were the American mergansers and cinnamon teal found on the lake for the first time by our parties. While the list was very good, a number of common species failed to put in an appearance.

Birds encountered were: Western, eared and pied-billed grebes, common, Pacific and red-throated loons; glaucous-winged, western, California and Bonaparte gulls, and Farallon cormorant; brown pelican, American merganser, mallard, cinnamon teal; scaup and surf scoter along the Key mole; ruddy duck, coot, California quail, red-shafted flicker and Anna hummer; Allen or rufous hummer, western flycatcher, California horned lark, bi-colored redwing and meadowlark; California purple finch, linnet, willow and green-backed goldfinches and pine siskin; Nuttall and song sparrows, San Francisco towhee, myrtle and Audubon warblers; Pacific salt-marsh yellowthroat, pileolated warbler, Vigors and tule wrens and chickadee; bush and wren tits and western robin. Forty-five species in all.

Members in attendance were: Mesdemoiselles Ayer, Bastin, Beaman, Boegle, Cassidy, Ethel Crum and Pettit; Mesdames Kibbe and Myer; Messrs. Bourne, Bryant, Gruening, Kibbe and Myer. As guests: Mesdemoiselles H. Chalmers, V. Ellis, E. H. McConnell, I. Richards, E. C. Schultz and R. Stutzmann; Mesdames Buckham and Bunker; Messrs. P. F. Bunker and F. M. van Orden; Scouts E. Fontana, S. Fletcher and L. Herbers. Fourteen members and thirteen guests.

A. S. KIBBE.

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## AUDUBON ASSOCIATION OF THE PACIFIC

FOR THE STUDY AND THE PROTECTION OF BIRDS

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Meets second Thursday of each month, at 8:00 p.m., in Assembly Hall of San Francisco Public Library, Larkin and McAllister Streets.

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